



Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy was adopted by the Committee on 21st September 2011 and will be reviewed bi-annually.

Date of last review: October 2025

Date of next review: October 2027

General Statement

Scarf's purpose is to provide support and services to disabled children/young people and their families, therefore extending equality of opportunity is at the heart of what Scarf does.

Scarf is committed to achieving equal opportunities in both employment and the services we provide. Scarf's services should reflect, through our employees, volunteers or community involvement, the cultural, religious and social make-up of our local New Forest community. We recognise that everyone is different and unique and this should be honoured - we want to make sure our services practice respect and promote and celebrate these differences.

Scarf recognises that there is a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to implement an equal opportunities policy. This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people, both in the workplace and in wider society. It combines several earlier pieces of legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

It is against law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone in employment and the provision of services because of a protected characteristic (see below). No user of Scarf's services, member, employee, volunteer, job applicant, visitor or coach/instructor/activity provider should receive less favourable treatment because of:

- gender, including gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy or maternity
- having or not having dependents
- religious belief or political opinion
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic, social or national origins, being an Irish traveller, or their association with a national minority)
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age
- or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

As an employer and provider of services to the community, Scarf accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out our commitment and the actions to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

It is the responsibility of all Trustees, Committee Members, Scarf members, employees, volunteers, coach/instructor/activity provider and service users to ensure that no member, service user, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated above. This policy therefore applies to applicants for employment, volunteers and members of the organisation alike.

Scarf recognises that some members may, because of their disabilities, say or do things which would be otherwise unacceptable and incompatible with the Equal Opportunities Policy. Scarf will do all it can to challenge such behaviour in a sensitive and appropriate way.

Equality Commitments

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Trustees, Committee and members to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Scarf.

Scarf is committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity for all members, service users, employees and volunteers
- promoting a good and harmonious environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated
- preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation or disability discrimination
- fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate

Responsibility

The Committee of Scarf has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers and members have a duty to ensure that the policy works in practice.

Scarf will bring to the attention of all employees, job applicants, volunteers and members the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

Recruitment and Selection

Any vacancies within Scarf will be advertised initially within its membership group and if no suitable applicant is found Scarf will advertise within the local New Forest area and advertisements will not discourage any individual or group from applying. Scarf will ensure that job descriptions, person

specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.

Any selection exercises will be carried out with regard to objective criteria which specifically avoid any issues of discrimination. Similarly, where possible, Scarf will ensure that such exercises are carried out by more than one person.

If a member of staff is disabled or becomes disabled, Scarf encourages them to tell the Chair of the Committee about their condition so that Scarf can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

All staff should understand their responsibility to show consideration to and to not discriminate against disabled colleagues, and this will be reinforced by team leaders. Employees are informed and reminded of their responsibility to notify their team leader of a member of Scarf's Committee of any disability that might not be obvious, in order to enable Scarf to take necessary steps to enable the employee's rights.

Training

Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees and volunteers will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job and personal development.

Dealing with Complaints

Members, volunteers or employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures (see attached appendix for details of procedure to follow). All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that members who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Issues should be raised with the relevant Scarf activity coordinator (eg Youth Club/Multi Sports Supervisor, Programme Coordinator or Meet and Greet) or Scarf Secretary as appropriate, who will then bring them to the Chair or Vice Chair and Secretary for discussion and an appropriate response (see attached appendix for details of procedure to follow).

Other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all of Scarf's other policies, but in particular our Recruitment Policy & Procedure, Scarf's Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policies (particularly in its description of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for both children & adults).

Procedure for Dealing with a Complaint re: Discrimination Issue

